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"SPARKS" FROM THE NEW YORK STATE CAPITOL FIRE

ALBANY, N.Y.

MARCH 29, 1911

OVER 50 SOVENIR VIEWS

PRICE 25¢

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Sparks from The New York State Capitol Fire

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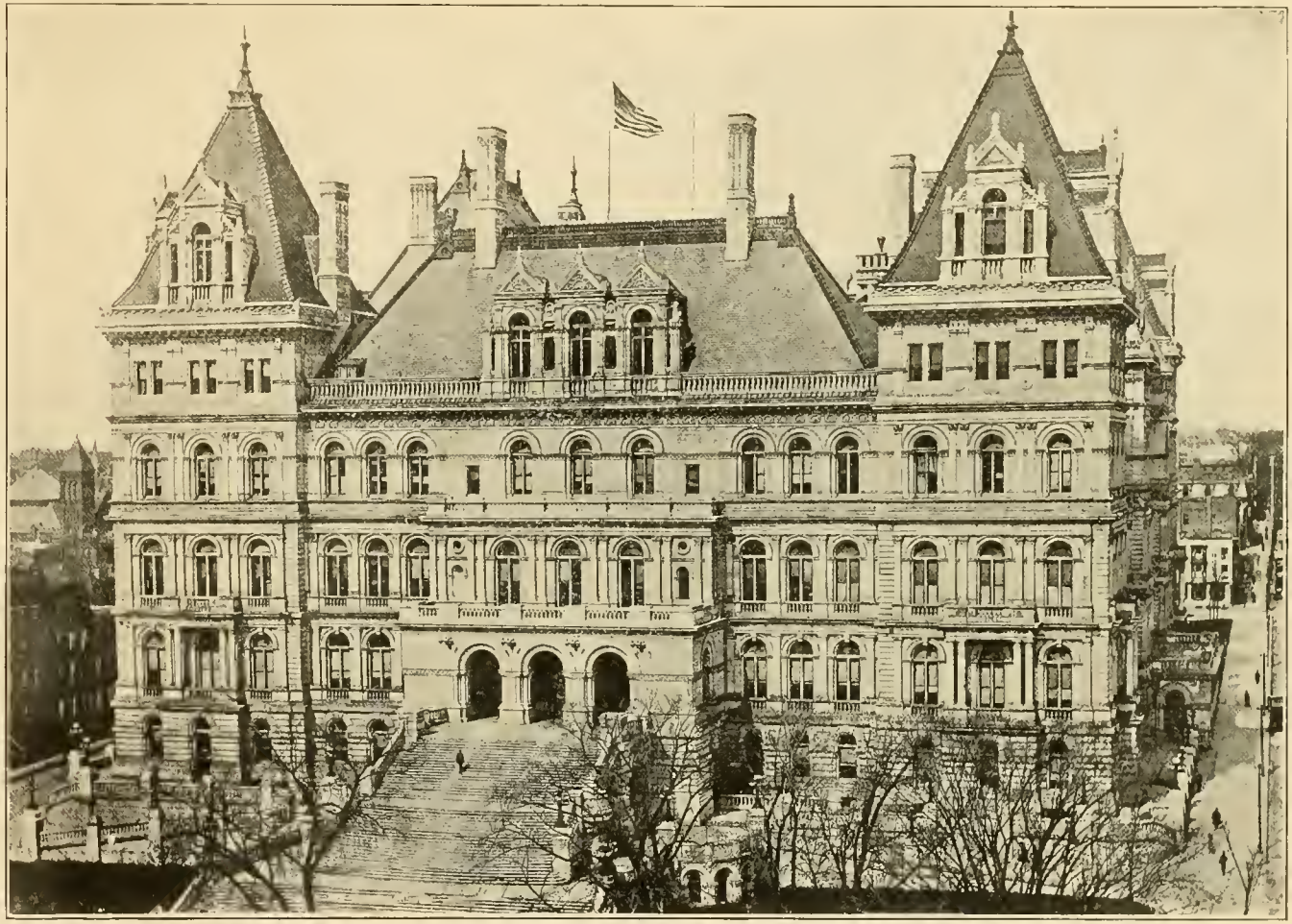


New York State Capitol as it looks from the East

(*Albany Evening Journal, March* 29, 1911.)

CAPITOL A SHOW-PLACE

Took Many Years to Build on Account of Its Magnificence

The erection of the capitol building was begun in the early 70's, but on account of the magnificent scale upon which the architects had planned the work it took many years to complete it. Since its erection it has gained nation-wide fame because of its size and the beauty and richness of its interior decoration. The western staircase was considered one of the most artistic of its kind in the country. For years visitors to this State from other parts of the country seldom returned home without seeing the New York State capitol. The large number of such visitors is attested by the fact that good-sized corps of guides are kept busy at the capitol the year around pointing out to sightseers its wonders. Although there have been several incipient blazes in the building the fire to-day is the first one that caused damage to any extent. The most serious of the previous fires occurred a few months ago, when the office of the State Lunacy Commission was flooded. A gas pipe melted, causing several firemen to be overcome with gas.

The magnificent western staircase that has been admired by thousands of visitors, to-day is badly damaged, and wreck, ruin and confusion abound on every hand in the western part of the structure. The walls and ceilings are stripped of their ornate porcelain blocks, doors have been smashed in, brownstone arches have crumbled, and the devastation is increased by the dripping ceilings and rivulets running over the floor and down the stairways.

Albany City Hall, used as temporary Capitol after the fire

The New York State Capitol looking from the northwest showing the Washington Avenue entrance and the west end, the part that was destroyed by fire

NEW YORK State's magnificent $26,000,000 capitol building, recognized the country over as one of the masterpieces of architecture, had its western section completely fire swept on the morning of March twenty-ninth, entailing a loss estimated by the State Architect at $5,000,000; practically destroying the State library with the most complete law library in the country, and destroying a tremendously valuable collection of books and ancillary collections of manuscripts and priceless historic relics, which it took one hundred years to collect with an unlimited supply of money, in addition to costing one human life. The fire made useless the entire west wing of the massive building, crippling fourteen State departments, and drove the Legislature out of the building to the city hall where James A. O'Gorman was elected United States Senator on March thirty-first, the first time that a Senator has been chosen outside the capitol halls.

The conflagration was one of the most spectacular that ever visited Albany. Flames shot from the windows in the west wing two hundred feet in the air, which with the setting of a cool, gray dawn presented a most picturesque sight. It brought thousands to Albany from all sections of the State.

Fire smoldered in the debris a week after the first alarm was sent in and streams were played on the burning embers until April twentieth. The first alarm was sent in at 2.41 on the morning of March twenty-ninth and the out bell was not sounded until 8.22 on the morning of March thirtieth. It took the entire fire department of one hundred and fifty men, ten engines pumping industriously for twelve streams, and over 11,000 feet of hose, for the department to master the blaze. Steamers were kept laboring at the fire seventy-two hours after its discovery.

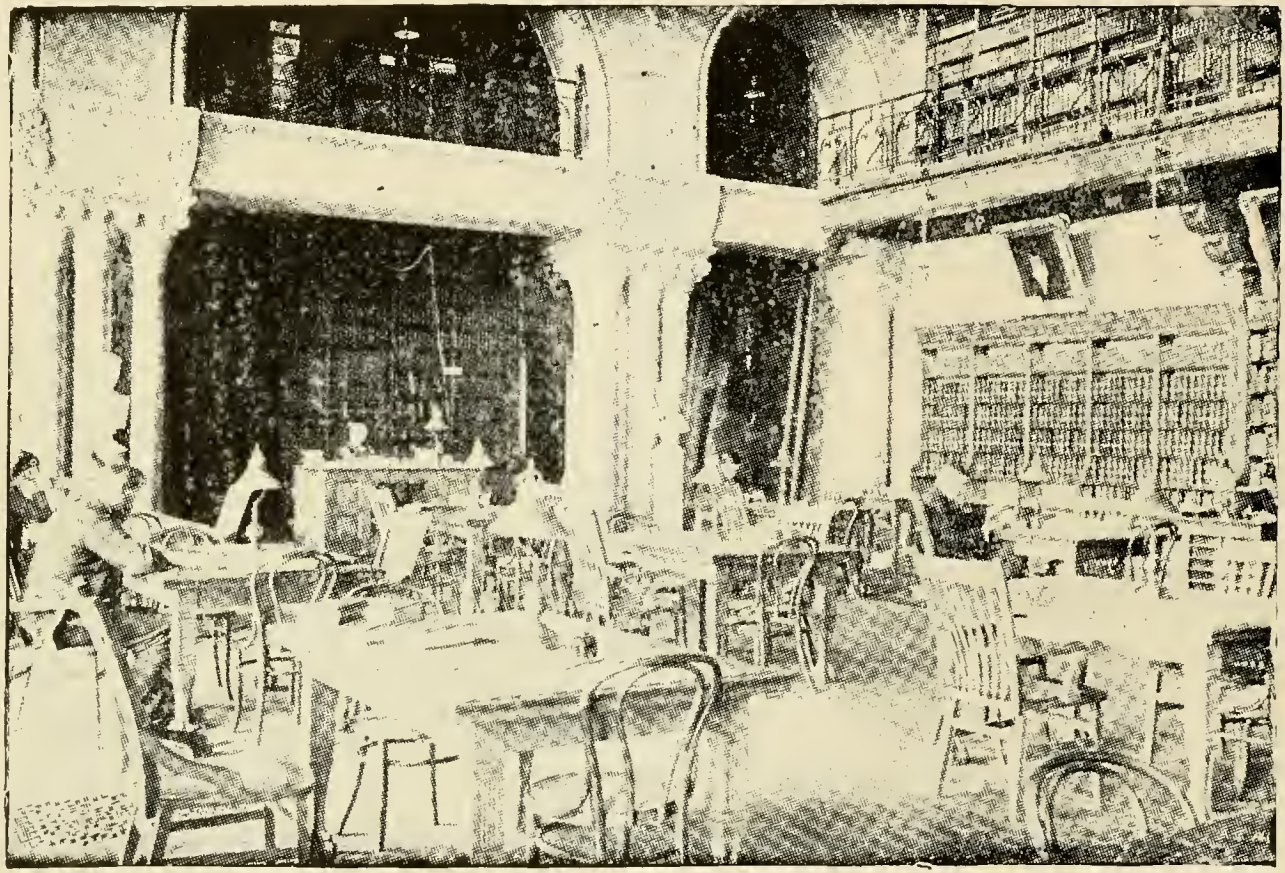
In five hours the fire wrought destruction to the building which was in course of construction for twenty years, from the time ground was broken in 1869, until its completion in 1899.

The whole western section burning

Just as the roof of the southwest tower fell in

When the fire in the northwest tower broke out for the second time

Fighting the flames in the northwestern section of Capitol



Library reading room before the fire

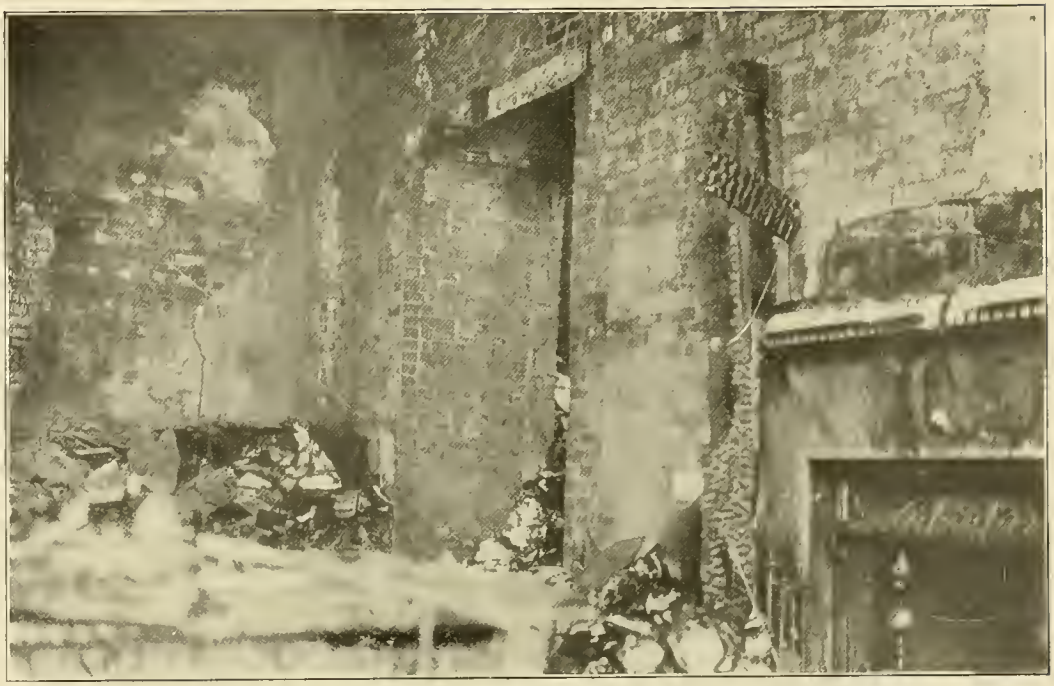
Looking north in the reading room of State Library. Circle in centre of arch over doorway is wooden frame of clock with works burnt out. Doorway in extreme right of picture leads to the Law Library in northwest corner of Capitol.

Law Library, third floor, looking up and south

Main reading room, State Library, looking toward northwest corner, showing steel beams of mezzanine floor, also beautiful red granite columns entirely ruined by heat

Main reading room, State Library, looking toward northeast corner, showing steel beams of mezzanine floor, also beautiful red granite columns entirely ruined by the fire

Looking from desk toward main entrance of State Library, firemen are fighting the fire directly over the main entrance the door leads to the Great Western Staircase

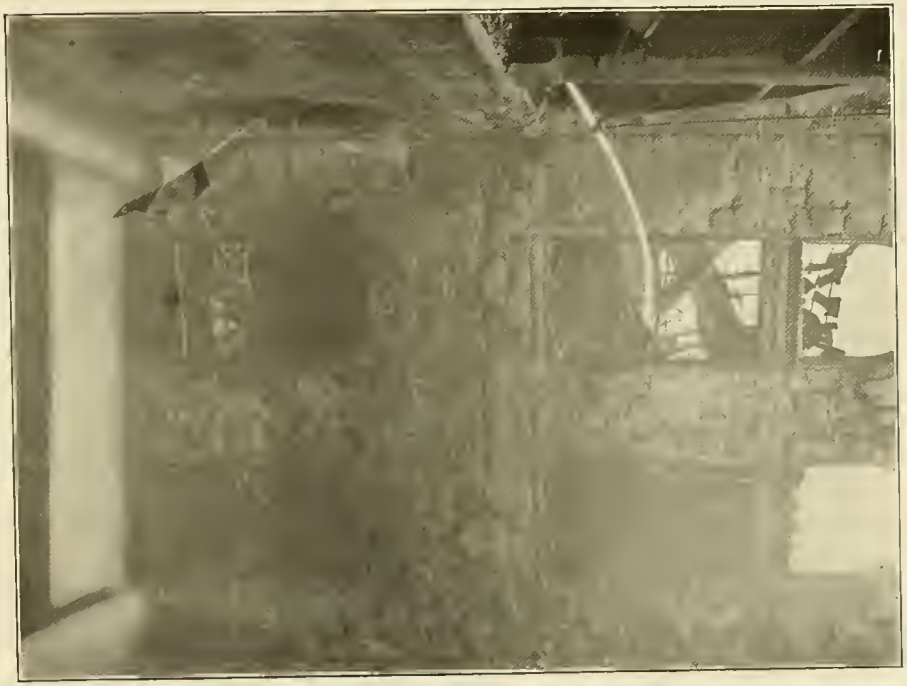


Part of State Library known as the Medical Library

Portion of burnt section

Senate Finance Committee Room, door leads to corridor running back of Senate Chamber

Fireman at work cooling down the ruins, playing stream through air shaft on third floor of Great Western Staircase



The same stream going across air shaft

Fourth floor, corridor on northern side of Great Western Staircase, showing stones that have fallen from the side ceiling, owing to the intense heat

Fourth floor, corridor on Southwestern Staircase; the cases contained valuable Indian Curios. The intense heat caused the stones to fall from sides and ceiling; the electric-light bulbs in the chandeliers were not broken

Senate Finance Committee Room

Looking down from roof in Library

Law Library, third floor, looking toward Assembly; note icicles hanging from ceiling

Pile of partly burnt books and papers

The fallen roof of southwestern part of Capitol

Northwest Court, west side

Southwest corner of Capitol, looking east on State Street

Part of southwest Dormer

Southwest dormer window looking south. The roof had fallen

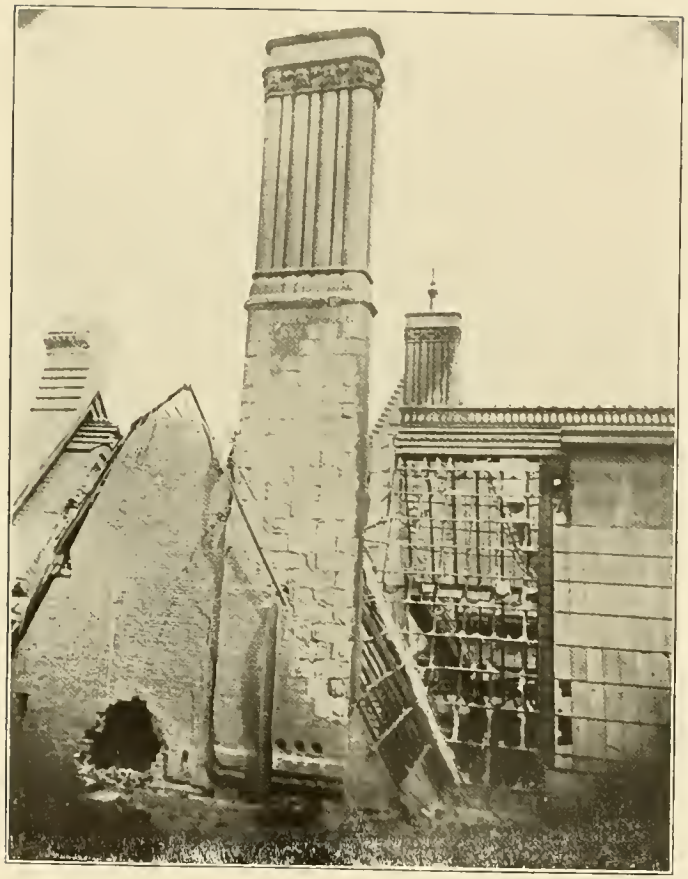
Showing remains of roof and floor in tower, southwest corner of building. Dormer window faces State St. Note twisted iron roof supports

Twisted iron in the southwest tower

Showing damage fire can do

Roof of the Great Western Staircase looking south from the Washington Avenue side of Capitol
The State Street half of the roof had fallen

Corridor leading from Senate Gallery Corridor to room in southwest corner of Capitol. The body of the watchman who lost his life in the fire was found where the broom stands



Part of roof near great western staircase

The remains of the Department of State Board of Regents, 4th floor

Looking through window in library

The effect fire had on the iron work

Near view of the red granite columns in the northeastern corner of the reading room of State Library, entirely destroyed by the heat

Coming on duty — the Capitol shortly after 9 a. m. on Wednesday was placed under Military guard

Firemen at work on southwest tower

Showing effect of fire on the stone

Fighting the fire in the southwestern section of building

Early stage of the fire

By permission of H. R. Sweny

The west side of Capitol showing fire in northwest corner, the fire in southwest corner was practically extinguished and roof had fallen

Northwest corner of Capitol when fire in this portion was at its height

Showing the fire in the northwest corner of Capitol with one of the fire engines and the crowd in the foreground

When fire in northwest tower was almsot extirguished

The western entrance to the Capitol, showing fire in the northwest corner

Washington Avenue looking west from Hawk Street, showing fire in northwest corner of Capitol

Firemen fighting the fire in the northwest corner of the Capitol

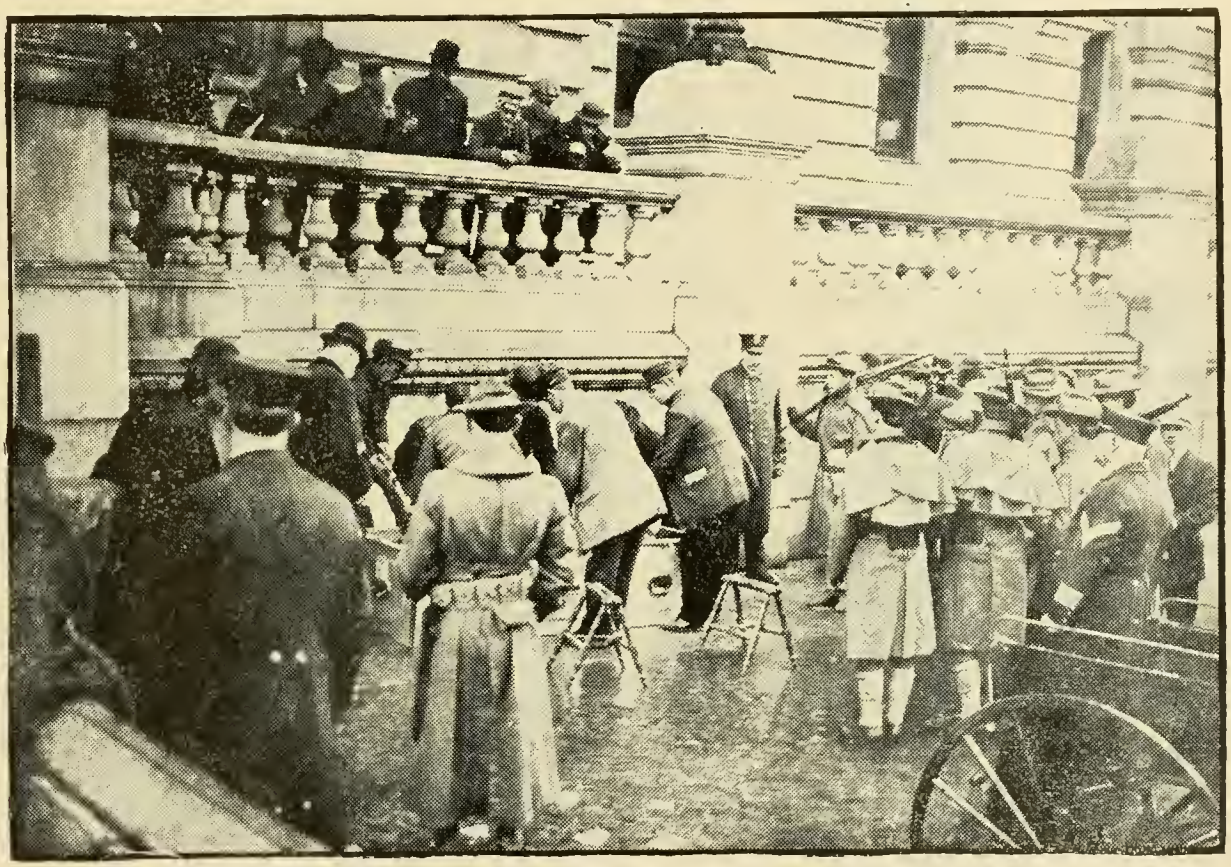
Pile of papers from Regents Department of the fourth floor of the southwest corner of Capitol

Military at work removing steel desk from Capitol

Cleaning up and searching for the remains of the Library Watchman

Western section of Capitol after the fire, looking from New Educational Building

Great western staircase, corridor fourth floor, after cleaning up



Removing the remains of Night Watchman Abbott from the Capitol

15 1911

Samuel Abbott who lost his life in the Capitol fire

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